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SENSITIVE
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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CE

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PBTS](#) [RS](#) [BO](#) [GG](#) [PL](#)
SUBJECT: POLAND SUPPORTS US ON SOUTH OSSETIA AND ABKHAZIA

REF: STATE 24186

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR DAN SAINZ FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)
)

[¶1.](#) (C) SUMMARY. The Polish MFA is encouraged by the new U.S. administration's firm stance on Georgia's territorial integrity. Tomasz Orłowski, Head of the Central Asia and South Caucasus Section at the Polish MFA, told us that Poland and the U.S. appear to be "on the same page." Orłowski said Polish diplomats accredited to Moscow had no plans to visit South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Poland plans to send its first tranche of approximately US \$1 million in assistance to Georgia for 2009. END SUMMARY.

REAFFIRMING GEORGIA'S INTEGRITY

[¶2.](#) (C) Orłowski told us that Warsaw "fully supports" the U.S. position on Georgia's territorial integrity, as described reftel. He noted "some previous concern within the Polish government" about whether the new U.S. administration would soften its position toward Russia at the expense of Russia's neighbors, but he was personally encouraged by our "tough, consistent statements" regarding Russia's actions on Georgian territory. Since February, the Polish MFA has noticed "a renewed effort" by Moscow to pressure Belarus, in particular, into recognizing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Orłowski emphasized that Warsaw was strongly urging Minsk to resist Russian pressure.

[¶3.](#) (C) Orłowski appreciated our praise of the EU presidency statement on Russia's basing plans, as well as Czech Foreign Minister Schwarzenberg's February 23 statement cautioning Belarus against recognizing South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Orłowski said Poland strongly backed Schwarzenberg's position, noting that the Czech foreign minister sent a "clear signal that EU pressure against Lukashenka should remain strong." Orłowski said Russia's proposed bases are unacceptable because they violated the August 12 cease-fire agreement and undermined Georgia's territorial integrity.

MOSCOW VISITS "UNIMAGINABLE"

[¶4.](#) (C) Orłowski assured us it would be "unimaginable" for Polish diplomats accredited to Moscow to visit South Ossetia and Abkhazia. He offered that Poland would be willing to help dissuade other countries from visiting these regions if the U.S. had evidence that they planned to do so.

POLAND PLANNING TRANCHE OF ASSISTANCE

[¶5.](#) (C) Poland was in the process of arranging its first tranche of assistance projects in Georgia for 2009, according

to Orlowski. He expected the amount to total PLN 3.5 million (approximately US \$1 million), which will be channeled through NGOs. Altogether, Poland had committed EUR 6 million in assistance for Georgia for 2008-2010.

COMMENT

16. (C) Besides confirming U.S.-Polish agreement on Georgia policy, our conversation served to allay MFA concerns that the U.S. might seek a grand bargain with Russia at the expense of Russia's neighbors, particularly Poland, Ukraine, and Georgia. Orlowski and his staff appeared visibly relieved that the U.S. would maintain its firm stance on Georgia's territorial integrity. The MFA would welcome continued clarification of U.S. policy on Russia, including reassurances that it will not have a negative impact on Russia's neighbors.

QUANRUD